



COMMISSION ON AGING

COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING

Minutes
June 26, 2017

PRESIDING: Sharonlee Vogel, Chair

Members Attending

Jennifer Asher
Reginald Avery
Angie Boyter
Peter Brunner
Barbara Catlin
Deborah Fleischmann
Susan Hailman
Jan Horan
Julia Mattis
Bob McLaughlin
Andrew Monjan
Eletta Morse
Sue Song
Michael Willis

Excused

Office on Aging and Independence

Peggy Hoffman
Emily LeClerc

Guests

Tiffany Callendar

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

Approve Agenda

Reg Avery motioned to approve the agenda and Pete Brunner seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Agenda accepted.*

Approve Minutes

Bob McLaughlin motioned to approve the minutes, and Reg Avery seconded the motion. Motion was approved. *All in favor. Minutes accepted.*

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The meeting began with a welcome to new commissioner Sue Song and introductions from other commissioners.

Virtual Dementia Tour Debrief

Emily Leclercq, Howard County Office on Aging and Independence, began the meeting with a debrief on the virtual dementia tour several commissioners took part in. The tour is a hands-on experience designed to provide an idea of the struggle of living with dementia. Participants are asked to complete a series of tasks while having their sensory abilities challenged. Overall the Commissioners who participated found the exercise valuable, but frustrating. Several felt the exercise was more geared towards simulating life with a disability, but still said it offered them a greater understanding of the challenges those with dementia or a disability could face daily.

Speak(Easy) Presentation

Tiffany Callendar of the Horizon Foundation provided the Commission with an overview of the Speak(Easy) initiative which focuses on helping county residents to establish a health care agent and having the conversations with that agent about their wishes for care.

Statistics indicated that most county residents do not have an advanced directive or health care agent. In looking to change those statistics, the Horizon Foundation began by holding focus groups to identify barriers. It was established that the county first needed motivation and education to make a change as well as an approachable process. Horizon worked to create a database that links to the Health Information Exchange of Maryland; this means that after using their website to designate an agent, the information is available to any doctor or hospital in Maryland that using the system. Additionally, information can be made available on a wide scale via use of the My Directives site.

Currently the Speak(Easy) program has completed a one year of pilot testing with fourteen community organizations and is gearing up to launch county wide in the fall. The website for the program is SpeakEasyHoward.org.

July Meeting Topics

For the July COA meeting, Commissioners were asked to suggest topics for the discussion with the County Executive. Sharonlee shared the list of topic areas below.

1. Silos and duplication in Aging Services, specifically between the Health Department, DCRS, and community providers. Are there ways to identify duplication?
2. Marketing, Communication, and the Website
3. Transportation, including suggestion of a pilot program establishing partnership with Uber/Lyft.
4. Support for the resubmission of Senate Bill 620, introduced by Gail Bates which liberalizes the requirements of the Aging in Place Tax Credit. This issue will also be raised at the Legislative Breakfast.
5. Senior Rates for cable tv services (if time allows).

Chair's Report

Sharonlee shared information on an anonymous survey DCRS sent out to community members. Overall the Commissioners who were familiar with the survey were unhappy with both the contents of the survey and the lack of notice given to the Commission. The Office will carry this feedback back to DCRS.

Office on Aging Report

Jennie Rittenhouse shared a new brochure for the Caregiver program and information on the Office's upcoming Dental Screening Event. An electronic version of the flier will be sent out to the entire Commission.

Senior Issues Heard (Sharing from Commissioners)

Angie Boyter attended the Bethel Senior Academy and was impressed by the offerings and resources available.

Sue Song shared concerns about the challenging in finding workers for the older adult population. More professional caregivers are going to be needed and attention needs to be given to developing this workforce.

Debbie Fleischmann reminded the Commission that the hospital will begin implementing the Lay Caregiver Law in August.

Jan Horan and Eletta Morse both attended the World Elder Abuse Awareness event at Miller Library and found the presentation to be excellent.

Julia Mattis shared concerns about senior residents losing their homes due to an inability to keep up with tax payments. She is aware of residents that did not factor tax payments into reverse mortgages and have been unable to keep up with payments.

Barbara Catlin reported that Bigger Conversations has just completed its 15th Caregiver Wellness Circle.

New Business

None.

Adjournment

Reg Avery motioned to adjourn. Bob McLaughlin seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

Recording Secretary: Jennie Rittenhouse

Next Meeting: July 24, 2017, Ellicott City 50+ Center, 7pm